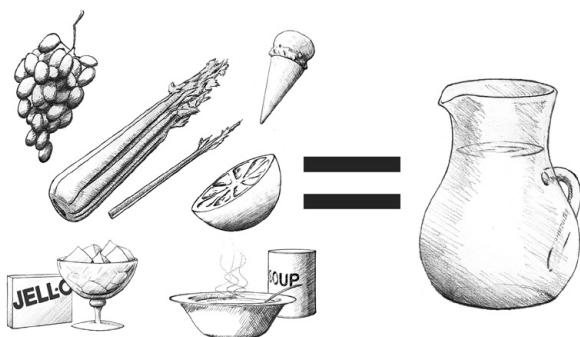


Eating, Diet, and Nutrition

Eating healthy foods can help you keep up your energy and strength. All dialysis and transplant centers have a **dietitian**. The dietitian helps people with kidney failure learn about healthy food choices. You should talk with your center's dietitian to make a meal plan.

The best diet for you will depend on which kidney failure treatment you choose after talking with your doctor.

- Hemodialysis
 - Limit how much liquid and water you drink. Fluid can build up in your body between hemodialysis sessions. Also, many foods contain water. The extra fluid in your body can cause swelling and high blood pressure. Extra fluid in your body makes your heart work harder.



Many foods contain water.

- Limit **sodium**, or salt. Watch out for sodium in frozen foods and prepared meals. You can also find sodium in canned foods, hot dogs, and fast food. Sodium makes you thirsty, which makes you drink more water and other liquids than you should.

Read more in the National Kidney Disease Education Program (NKDEP) fact sheet *Sodium* at www.nkdep.nih.gov.

- Limit **potassium**. Potassium is found in many fruits and vegetables such as potatoes, tomatoes, oranges, and bananas. Too much potassium can make your heart beat unevenly. Hemodialysis does not remove potassium from your body well.

Read more in the NKDEP fact sheet *Potassium* at www.nkdep.nih.gov.

- Eat **protein**-rich foods such as meat, fish, and eggs. Hemodialysis removes protein from your body.

Read more in the NKDEP fact sheet *Protein* at www.nkdep.nih.gov.

- Limit **phosphorus**. Phosphorus helps your bones, blood vessels, and muscles work.

However, too much phosphorus can make your bones weak. Limiting phosphorus can be hard. Foods that contain phosphorus, such as meat and milk, also contain protein that you need. You should be careful to eat enough protein, yet not so much that you get too much phosphorus. You can avoid other foods that contain phosphorus, such as cola, tea, beans, and nuts.

Read more in the NKDEP fact sheet *Phosphorus* at www.nkdep.nih.gov.

- Find healthy ways to add calories to your diet. Calories are found in all foods and give your body energy. Many people on hemodialysis do not have a good appetite and do not get enough calories. Vegetable oils are good sources of calories. Vegetable oils include olive oil, canola oil, and safflower oil. Use them on breads, rice, and noodles. Hard candy, sugar, honey, jam, and jelly provide calories and energy. However, if you have diabetes, speak with your doctor or dietitian before eating extra sweets.

Read more about nutrition for people who are on hemodialysis in *Eat Right to Feel Right on Hemodialysis* at www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov.

- Peritoneal dialysis
 - Drink as much water and other liquids as you need. If you are holding too much fluid or too little fluid, your doctor needs to know.
 - Limit sodium to control your thirst and help prevent heart problems. You can use spices other than salt to flavor your food.



You can use spices other than salt to flavor your food.

- You may need to eat more potassium-rich foods. Peritoneal dialysis removes potassium from your body. Talk with your doctor or dietitian about the right amount of potassium for you.
- Eat protein-rich foods. Peritoneal dialysis removes even more protein from your body than hemodialysis.
- Limit phosphorus to keep your bones strong.
- You may need to limit your calorie intake. The salty water also contains some sugar. Your body absorbs the sugar, which can cause you to gain weight.
- Kidney transplant
 - Limit sodium to help prevent heart problems.
 - You should be able to eat normal amounts of phosphorus and potassium. You may need to adjust the amounts if blood tests show a problem.



Eat protein-rich foods.

- Eat protein-rich foods to repair muscle breakdown and protect against infection.
- You may need to limit your calories. The medicines you take can make you gain weight.
- Conservative management
 - Limit protein to prevent the buildup of wastes in your blood.

You may have other needs and limits, depending on how well your treatments work.

Points to Remember

- Kidney failure means your kidneys no longer filter your blood well enough to keep you healthy.
- The treatments for kidney failure are
 - hemodialysis
 - peritoneal dialysis
 - a kidney transplant
 - conservative management